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ABSTRACT

A yearlong project called "Inventing the Future of Teaching" culminated in a summer institute which brought together 50 teachers from all levels of education and experience to explore future options in education. This document is the product of that institute. The challenge issued by the participants calls for quality education for all learners, including provision of the financial and political support that will guarantee equal opportunities for all communities. Some key points of the document are: (1) schools in the future (more than 20 but less than 100 years from now) will be campus-style learning centers whose goal will be to educate life-long learners and teachers;. (2) with the help of community mentors, students will carry on significant investigative work; (3) student work will be assessed by the community of learners based on the student's mastery of specific skills necessary to taking one's place in the world; (4) businesses will offer classes, accept interns, endow laboratories, allow in-school time for parent-employees, and provide day care for the children in their community; (5) professional teachers will have knowledge of child development, learning theory, teaching modalities, and curriculum development; (6) teacher training schools will be located within the public school setting, and allow for collaboration among new teachers, experienced teachers, and research-oriented professors; and (7) planning and decision making will be school based and involve teachers. This booklet elaborates on these and other points and includes letters of commendation from leaders in the education community. (AMH)

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The Teachers' Vision of the Future of Education: A Challenge to the Nation

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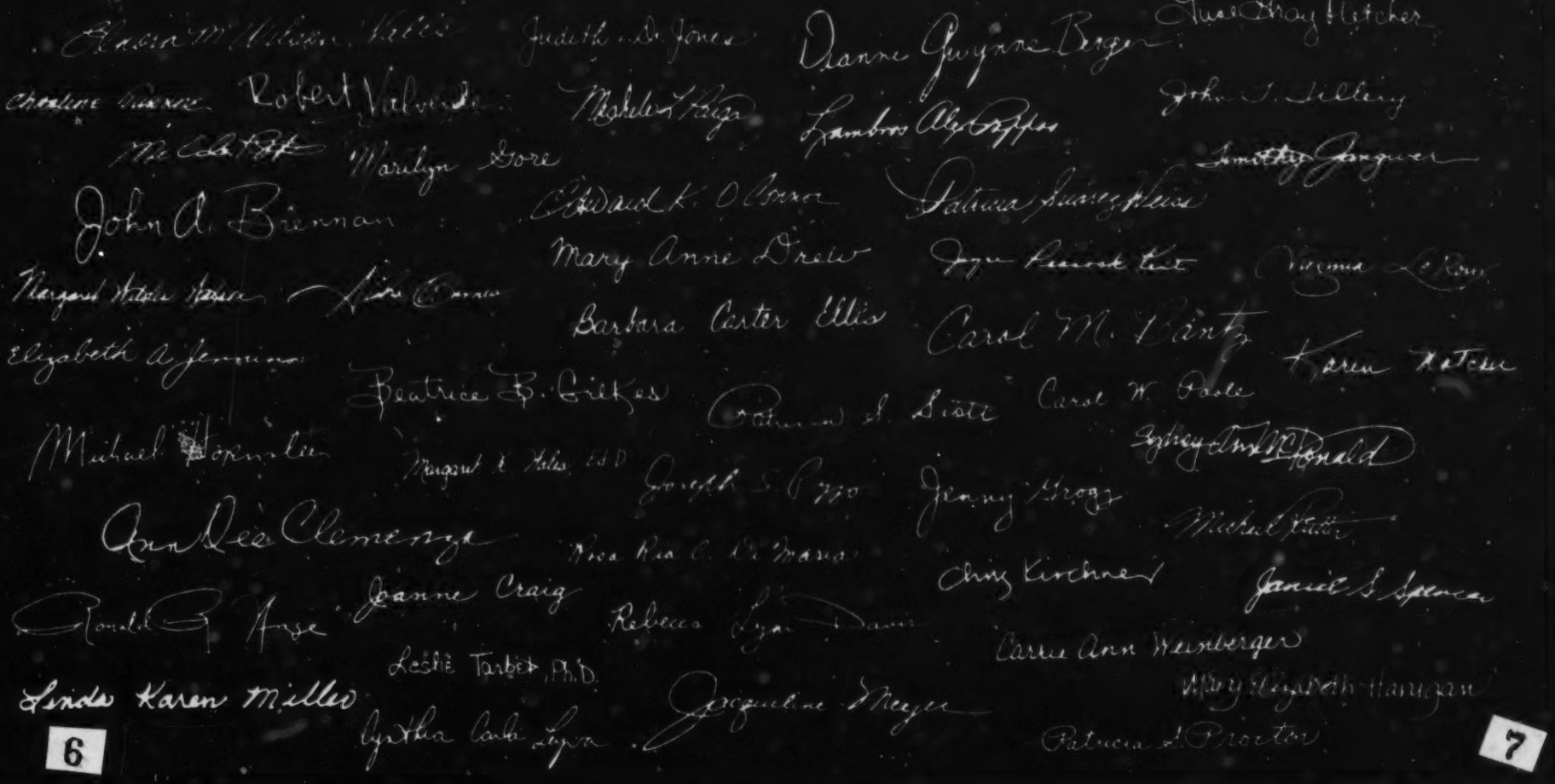
...with an educational system designed in the 19th century that is clearly outdated and repressive. It no longer serves us, or the children we teach. Increasingly we are asked to be substitute parents, social workers and even police for children who are often victims of violence, drugs and deteriorating families and communities. Even though there are a few model schools that work and some heroic teachers who buck the system, it is the failure of the whole system that concerns us. Systemwide failure now threatens to undermine our society.

In order to have a free, productive and creative society, we must engineer a fundamental transformation of our nation's educational system. To begin with, we must re-define who is learner and who is teacher, and where learning takes place and why. And we must create a vision of what teaching and learning can be.

Here is our vision—together with some of the concerns on which it is based, the new definitions that we need in order to actualize the vision, and the challenges that we face, as a profession and as a nation, to

make it happen. We have taken the first step. Now we need you to join us.

With hope for the future.



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THE TEACHERS' VISION OF THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION:

A CHALLENGE TO THE NATION

Prepared with support of

Metropolitan Life Foundation

Published by

IMPACT II THE TEACHERS NETWORK

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families and community.

we struggle...

INTRODUCTION

Since publication of ***A Nation at Risk*** in 1983, we have heard everyone's educational agenda from the President and governors to state legislators and corporate executives. During this time, the "rising tide of mediocrity" has become a crisis. . . and one collective voice has been missing or perhaps drowned out. That is the voice of the classroom teacher.

In the fall of 1989, IMPACT II began a yearlong project that provided teachers with the opportunity to participate in a series of workshops, designed by Futures-Invention Associates, and helped them to identify their deepest concerns and to create a vision of the future for teaching and learning in this country. With grants from the Metropolitan Life Foundation, the goal of this project, called "Inventing the Future of Teaching," was to bring the concerns, ideas and vision of teachers to the public. Teachers have not heretofore been at the center of educational reform; they do not own it. Therefore, it cannot succeed at the classroom level—which we know, in the end, is the only place that counts.

"Inventing the Future of Teaching" culminated this past summer at an institute in Snowbird, Utah. IMPACT II brought together 50 outstanding teachers from across the country. Selected from hundreds of applicants, these teachers came from urban, rural and suburban elementary and secondary schools. They represented a diversity of personalities, generations, backgrounds and cultures. They were teachers of the year, mentor teachers, published authors, grant recipients, and teachers with doctorates. They were new teachers, veteran teachers with over 30 years of experience, and second-career teachers.

The 50 teachers were all members of IMPACT II—The Teachers Network. IMPACT II is a unique, nationwide, educational, non-profit networking organization that recognizes and rewards innovative teachers who exemplify professionalism, independence and creativity within public school systems. IMPACT II provides teachers with grant money for the dissemination of fresh and creative in-school programs developed by teachers and then "networks" the programs to other interested teachers. An innovative force and a leader of "teacher empowerment," IMPACT II was the first organization in the country to acknowledge teachers as professionals capable of designing and implementing successful programs that reach and motivate children.

This document is the result of the work of those 50 teachers at Snowbird. We hope it will serve to support all teachers in the design and organization of their own schools. Although the teachers recognized that developing a vision was only the first step in creating change, with more and more schools organizing site-based management teams and instituting shared decision making, teachers now have a process for beginning to work toward realizing this vision.

We are grateful to the following organizations for serving as advisors to the project and for providing written responses that are included in this document: Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Committee for Economic Development, Council for Aid to Education, Education Commission of the States, American Federation of Teachers and the National Education Association. Also, many thanks to the Metropolitan Life Foundation for its support. The foundation's faith in teachers and its respect for their work have given us the opportunity to envision a more promising future.

THE TEACHERS' VISION OF THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION

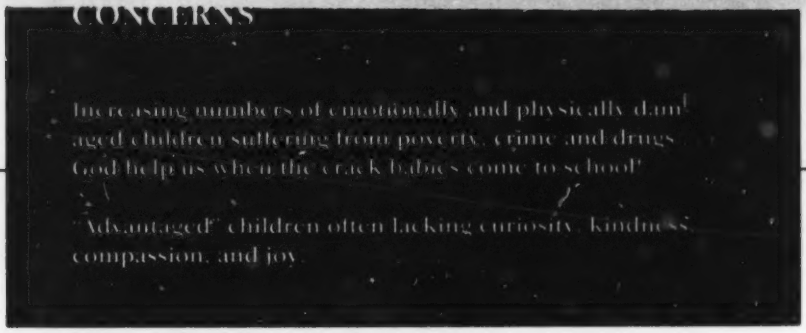
Snowbird, Utah, August 1990. We are 50 teachers from around the country and we have a week away from our schools to meet face to face and share our concerns about teaching and learning. Our challenge is to envision a future for education that is creative and worthy of us and our students. Is it possible for 50 very different teachers with strong opinions about education, from different regions around the country, to find common elements in their hopes for the future? Surprisingly, a vision does emerge...

Envision with us the future: It is now sometime in the future—more than 20 but less than 100 years from now. The "schools" we see are no longer the isolated schools of the 1990s but rather campus-style community learning centers with walls that protect but do not confine. There are parks, sports centers, playing fields, a public library, and medical and social support services.

This complex includes multimedia technology centers for research, global collaboration, and interest exploration. There are well-equipped laboratories for inquiry-based research, language labs, planning rooms, performance areas, animal habitats, student-run supply stores, and gardens and greenhouses that provide produce for the food plaza.

FOR CHILDREN...

The younger child thrives in a learning environment that is safe, nurturing, and supportive of every variety of intelligence, learn-


CONCERNS
Increasing numbers of emotionally and physically damaged children suffering from poverty, crime and drugs. God help us when the crack babies come to school!
"Advantaged" children often lacking curiosity, kindness, compassion, and joy.

ing style and culture. All children are gifted. We no longer focus on a child's weaknesses or limitations, but our respect and admiration for the individual results in our supporting his or her unique developmental progress.

Early learning experiences involve the"whole child." Curriculum is developed with an awareness of a child's emotional, physical, creative, intellectual and environmental needs. Students and their teachers begin with a study of their immediate community as they develop courses relevant to their lives and interests.

Not Just For Children...

In our vision, learning is no longer just for children and teaching is no longer done only by teachers. These learning centers are for the whole community. Children, teenagers, seniors and working adults come together to learn and teach. The focus of education for our young people is to help them learn the techniques of gathering information; acquire the skills of reading, writing, communication and working cooperatively; and discover the great joy of learning.

All classrooms are arranged for collaborative, cooperative work. Desks and tables are clustered; computers, books and maps are readily available. Adults explore new career options

while they help teach the young. Older people share their wisdom as they continue to learn. Groups of all ages discuss ideas, problems and community issues. The goal is to learn to be "lifelong" learners and teachers in a community that honors education.

Students Become Lifelong Learners...

At higher levels of cognitive and emotional development, we envision a student's own intellectual project(s) as the primary focus for generating meaningful work. Students are enabled to define, develop and value their own abilities and talents, continually moving toward increasingly sophisticated experiences and projects that confirm, challenge and deepen those aptitudes, interests and insights.

Students initiate learning activities, interacting with peer groups as well as with instructors and other professionals in collaborative settings. Community mentors play a vital role in supporting student learning activities. Local artists, music critics, social workers, college professors, writers, electricians, accountants, symphony conductors, city planners, medical professionals, computer specialists, business people, senior citizen retirees, architects, engineers, homemakers and other regional teachers help facilitate students' learning.

With the help of these community mentors, students carry on significant investigative work, making decisions to solve problems and answer meaningful questions that impact on themselves, their peers and their communities. Most important, students integrate learning experiences that cut across formerly discrete and often isolated disciplines in a learning center that is truly interdisciplinary.

CONCERNS

Mass-produced learning, textbook-driven curriculum, and testing, resulting in rote learning, not creative thinking.

Labeling and tracking of children, creating isolation, shame and withdrawal.

NEW DEFINITION

THE TEACHER

There is a basic distinction between a teacher and a professional teacher. Anyone may be a teacher, but a professional teacher is an educator by virtue of insights and professional background. A parent can teach a child to tie shoes, a grandparent can teach a granddaughter to tie trout flies, but a "professional" teacher ties a child to learning itself.

This complex charge demands a knowledge of child development, learning theory, teaching modalities and curriculum development. In our future, teachers will also take on new areas of study focusing on family and community, leadership theory, problem solving and conflict resolution, and teacher evaluation. There will also be "required" courses in budgeting, finance and management.

Our vision is based on our ability to draw from the top echelons of university graduates. If we are to take on the goal of educating lifelong learners, the ability to learn will be critical for educators. By improving salaries, working conditions and the status of teaching and by restructuring the profession to rectify its lack of collegiality, we will be in a better position to attract talented individuals to the field. We will also develop programs to facilitate career changes so that older, more experienced people can become professional teachers, and we will recruit from all cultures.

Dear Colleagues:

For several years, we at The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching have been tracking the views of teachers because of our concern that their voices are rarely heard. Not surprising, many of the concerns that IMPACT II teachers have are thoroughly documented in responses to our own surveys. IMPACT II teachers, for example, see emotionally and physically damaged children suffering from poverty, crime, and drugs. And our data dramatically supports this observation. Indeed, eight out of ten teachers we surveyed report dealing with abused or neglected children, student apathy, disruptive behavior, and absenteeism at their schools.

IMPACT II teachers also are bothered by the lack of support, respect, and empowerment to do their jobs. This same concern was vividly reported by one teacher who told us: "A lot of time is spent on preparation at home, on planning, shopping for, and making materials. I don't think people realize that the job does not stop when teachers leave the building."

I was especially impressed by the evidence that the problem teachers confront is not simply lack of time, but the lack of resources, too. A startling 96 percent of those we surveyed report spending their own money on supplies—averaging an estimated $250 during the first half of the 1989-90 school year. In response to this disturbing reality, IMPACT II teachers view empowerment as absolutely crucial—empowerment over funds, curriculum, time, and methods and means to teach.

The good news is that the dedicated teachers who drafted this valuable report have come up with an inspired vision, one that subscribes to the idea that "learning is no longer just for children and teaching is no longer done only by teachers." Schools of the future are to be learning centers for the whole community, where children, teenagers, seniors, and working adults come together to learn and teach. And, in this vision, community mentors, local artists, music critics, social workers, college professors, and senior citizens and business people also will have a vital role to play.

Finally, IMPACT II teachers insightfully warn against providing a "narrow nationalism" to the students. We must emphasize, they say, that we are members of a "world community." This warning reinforces a concern we expressed in ***High School***. In that report we said: "If education cannot help students see beyond themselves and better understand the interdependent nature of the world, each new generation will remain ignorant and its capacity to live confidently and responsibly will be dangerously diminished."

Clearly, IMPACT II is one of the nation's most vital efforts on behalf of excellence in education, and I salute the teachers in this enormously impressive organization who are contributing so effectively to the coming generation.

Warm regards,

Ernest L. Boyer
President
The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching

Flexible scheduling and individual student programming allow students to move among teachers and community sites and resources to complete learning projects. These projects spring from complex decisions about how literacy-based and interpersonal skills combine to create significant work in a number of modalities that support all intellectual work. Critical literacy skills (reading, writing, analytic thinking) are integral to all student endeavors.

In addition to individual learning projects, students elect from seminars, required reading and writing workshops or "studios," and laboratories. They engage with a wide variety of challenging texts from all disciplines and also create their own texts, always in the service of the students' own intellectual and emotional development and meaningful purpose.

The Role of the Teacher in the Future...

In our community learning center, educators are teacher administrators who serve as the choreographers, facilitators, and encouragers of the learning process. Educators are the professional teachers in the community—the specialists who have specifically learned how people learn, how to motivate people, how to organize instruction, and how individuals grow and develop. They guide the learners' relationship with the larger community. Education schools are no longer at colleges but are located within the public school setting. This new alignment allows for collaboration and learning among new teachers, experienced educators, and the school-based, research-oriented professors.

CONCERNS

Indifference to our educational system, and lack of financial and political support.

Teachers without support, respect and empowerment to do their jobs.

NEW DEFINITION

TEACHER EMPOWERMENT

If teachers are to be leaders, assuming new responsibilities for education, they must be empowered. This means having control:

Control of curriculum. This involves having a central voice in curriculum development and implementation and not merely creating lessons to teach a mandated curriculum.

Control of funds. This extends far beyond the authority to expend a $100 or $200 personal classroom budget.

Control of time—and space. Teachers will determine scheduling and space assignments. They will work some of the weeks. Planning time is recognized as a basic teaching activity and is expanded.

Control of the methods and materials they use to help students discover the how and what of learning. Teachers will be discipline-study specialists and introduce new technology. They will develop strategies for updating and maintaining powerful ongoing learning.

Empowerment also means having a professional teacher work space will reflect re-defined roles as facilitator, policymaker and consultant. Each teacher will have a fully equipped, [illegible] office. In the office, teachers will meet with students, parents, colleagues and community leaders. The atmosphere of the work space will reflect the dignity befitting teachers and those with whom they interact.

Dear Teachers:

I read your report, ***The Teachers' Vision of the Future of Education: A Challenge to the Nation,*** with a great deal of interest and excitement.

In the eight years since the release of ***A Nation at Risk,*** dozens of education reform reports have been released, but very few have been built around a teacher's point of view. Teachers—50 of you coming from a broad array of backgrounds—searched your experiences for common concerns about teaching and in so doing produced a unique vision for American education.

This report—because you searched your own experiences to the depths—represents a much broader group of teachers than you can imagine. The careful search for words and ideas clarifying your concerns and daily struggles must be heard not only by state and federal policy makers but also by the public.

In my travels and talks with teachers, I often hear your words repeated by other teachers. They are concerned that too often they are being asked to serve as substitute parents, social workers and police officers.

The vision you have articulated is a much broader view of teaching and learning than society has been willing to support in the past. Ironically, society itself, through its daily actions, is asking for schools to serve this new vision. The public and those who represent them do not yet realize this truth. This report can serve as a useful mirror for society. Your dreams, your concerns, your recommendations must be constantly polished and placed in front of society. Only then will each of us see that we are all working for a common vision for American education.

Your words—*Learning is the heart and soul of human existence and the health of the human community* —say it so well! Good luck—I wish you well in this endeavor.

Sincerely,

Chris Pipho

Chris Pipho
Director, State Relations
The Education Commission of the States

Teachers design and implement large-group instruction. They also spend a considerable part of any day advising students' learning projects, conferencing with individual students and small groups, and collaborating with other professionals in support of student completion of a meaningful learning goal, mutually agreed upon. Also, in the context of the school day, teachers foster their own professional and intellectual development in a variety of learning—and networking—activities.

Beyond Testing...

Assessment of student work is carried out by the community of learners, based on the student's mastery of specific skills necessary to taking one's place in the world. Both student and teacher evaluate the work the student has generated. The peer group plays a key role as well in offering feedback to other students whose work they have shared and critiqued in its various stages. Since students are primarily engaged in open-ended inquiries rather than closed systems, and are producing new knowledge and insights, evaluation is the springboard for motivating students to a greater level of shared expectation.

In our future, dropping out does not exist since the concept of learners has been expanded. Going from school to the work force is merely a change of focus for learning. Formal schooling can and does take place within the community. Students are not the assembly-line products of the 19th and 20th century but the inspired and inspiring seekers of meaningful work and worth of the 21st century. Learners are the creators and insurers of a future for us all.

CONCERNS

Fragmentation and short attention spans resulting from overexposure to television and 50-minute school periods

Arts underfunded, considered "fluff" and not essential to learning

What This Vision Means for Teachers...

The challenge to educators is to shift responsibility from teacher to student, from passive learner to active agent of and collaborator in his or her own intellectual development. We envision a model in which teachers let go of the primacy and authority of the body of knowledge they were formerly trained to transmit in traditional disciplines. The paradigm is the decentered classroom where teachers and learners have authority over learning, privileging the student voice and empowering the individual learner.

The Future of the Family and Education...

If our vision of the future of education is to work, the family must be returned to its age-old place as the central institution of individual significance. At the same time we know that the concept of "family" must also encompass all the people who support and nurture an individual. The family is a unit of support. For a child this might be a mother, a father, and a retiree at a local senior center. For another child, this might be foster parents and a college student. For an immigrant, this might be the community member who welcomes and enculturates him or her. Children find that adults are caring, supportive, nurturing, safe people. Adults have similar connections

To the Teachers of IMPACT II:

It is inspiring to read the collective vision for the future of education of a group of teachers who are among the nation's most innovative and dedicated educators. Restructuring the nation's educational institutions cannot be imposed from above. The most critical improvements must take place at the point of learning—in the school, in the classroom, and in the interaction between teacher and student.

Over five years ago, in its policy report ***Investing in Our Children,*** the Committee for Economic Development declared that improving the nation's schools required "nothing less than a revolution in the role of the teacher and the management of the schools." Among its strategies for achieving this revolution CED called for enhancing and strengthening the professional roles of teachers by maximizing their abilities and opportunities to exercise judgement and make decisions, upgrading their working environment, supporting more competitive salaries, implementing higher standards and peer review, and developing better measures of accountability.

Although many of these strategies are beginning to be implemented in individual schools and school districts around the country, few initiatives take the comprehensive and coordinated approach that will be necessary for bringing about real improvement in education and ensuring that every child has the opportunity to become an informed, productive, and responsible citizen. Seeing this effort through will not be easy. It will require a broad-based coalition of educators, business leaders, public officials, parents, and other stakeholders in the community who have the vision, dedication, and willingness to see the job through. Teachers must play a pivotal role in such an effort, and the IMPACT II project can be an important step in that direction.

Cordially,

Sol Hurwitz
President
Committee for Economic Development

that prevent a sense of hopelessness or isolation. No person is isolated, homeless, hungry, or abused. Every individual in the community belongs to a family. These relationships go beyond blood ties and legal boundaries. Members of a child's "family" are vital to his or her learning.

In the future, violence is not used as a vehicle for securing material items or solving problems; drugs are not sought to numb the pain of living or of memory; people do not reproduce to fill voids. Abuse—physical, emotional and social—is replaced by an accepting, loving and nurturing environment.

The Role of Business and the Larger Community in Education in the Future...

In our vision, businesses (commerce, industry, and agencies), including all economic resources and foundations of a specific community, are integrally entwined with the learning centers of that community. All employees take time to work with people in the community. Businesses are tightly woven into the fabric of learning. They offer classes in financial and career planning, accept student interns and apprentices, lead students on "great adventures," endow classroom labs, volunteer teachers, pay for "chairs" for educators, allow time for parent-employees to work with their children in school and conference with teachers, and provide day care for the children in their community.

Technology has increased global learning and teaching, helped foster independence in learning, and provided learners with simulated "real world" experiences. It is used by learners to effect communi-

CONCERNS

Breakdown of the family and lack of day care and other family support systems.

New immigrants and minority families alienated from public education.

NEW DEFINITION

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Existing boards of education, in our vision, have been replaced by planning teams. These teams are composed of professionals and people from family services, businesses, and community support centers, as well as parents and other family members. The planning teams meet frequently to evaluate and collaborate on community learning, community needs, and community issues.

At the school level, all decisions regarding staffing are made by teachers, who will also hire personnel to carry out administrative functions. The primary challenge in our future will be to design positions that directly support and impact on the learning process.

Teachers sit as voting members of federal, state and local commissions and boards, guaranteeing that the teacher has input at all levels of government. The decision-making and financial communities have immediate access to the teacher as the trained expert in the field of education. Consulting teachers for educational advice has become as fundamental as consulting lawyers for legal advice.

Dear Teachers:

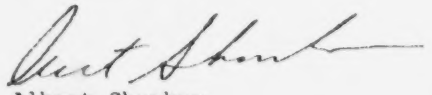
The world has long known the power of vision to move mountains and turn tides. Great teachers like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. had visions of a world changed significantly from what they knew. Their visions have guided men and women to challenge things as they were, in order to create a better future for others. The ability to see a future different from the present has characterized great leaders.

But vision is not the domain only of the charismatic few. It belongs to all who would make the world, or their small part of it, better than the way they find it. It belongs particularly to those who in some way shape the future, e.g., it belongs to teachers.

Through your participation in the teacher institute you have picked up that mantle of leadership. In this publication your voices are heard in the articulation of a vision of the future of education. The depth and breadth of your concerns are a reflection of the realities we face; your vision for the future pushes past these boundaries.

Visions provide direction and guidance for leaders. They are the touchstones for change. Your expression of a future of education will undoubtedly draw a response and command the attention of others, who may in turn agree or disagree with you. It is in the nature of public education that all voices must be heard. Beyond this, there is an even more far-reaching influence you may have; and that is in inspiring other teachers to give voice to their visions and thereby empower themselves.

Sincerely,



Albert Shanker
President
American Federation of Teachers

CONCERNS

General apathy in children and adults about the future of our planet.

Young people not integrated in our society—marginalized and frequently ignored.

NEW DEFINITION

WORLD VIEW

[redacted]

Since school is year round, students have the opportunity to spend a quarter "recess" expanding their universe by experiencing a great learning adventure. They leave their local community for two to four weeks in order to learn in a part of the larger world community. Older students go along as teachers, as assistants, and of course always as learners.

An integral part of our vision is a teacher travel and exchange program—one for new teachers and one for experienced teachers. New teachers, (perhaps as a recruitment incentive), after three years of teaching, have the option of participating in a teacher exchange either nationally or internationally. Thereafter, any teacher who has been teaching for five years is eligible to exercise his or her option to travel once again. This program offers each teacher the opportunity to continue learning and expanding global awareness.

cation and access information, through readily available computer networks, in order to make informed, valid learning choices.

In other areas of the community we find museums, theater groups, art centers, music groups, recreational and sports centers, libraries, town councils, animal shelters, recycling centers, fire and emergency facilities, waste treatment plants, and retirement centers. These organizations serve as learning labs and interact with the learning centers. Members of the community act as contributors to, as well as consumers of, these services and support groups.

Central to our vision of the future is our belief that learning is the heart and soul of both human existence and the health of the human community. Learning is lifelong and occurs in every aspect of an individual's life; it is the conduit for self-sufficiency; it creates responsible, secure, creative, and involved individuals. Learning celebrates individual uniqueness and strengthens the gold threads of cultural diversity. Learned people take pride in their products; they are empowered; they are protectors and caretakers of the Earth; their spirits nourish and are nourished by the arts; their minds are kept alive and vital through creative, analytical and critical thinking.

The vision we have of the future of education is based on the assumption that, in the 21st century, ours must become a nation of creative thinkers, designers and innovators. We will work in a global economy requiring new skills in ever more complex systems and technologies, with diminishing resources. No longer will we have just one job, one career; we will all have to become lifelong learners and teachers. That will mean creating new priorities and new goals and welcoming experiments and change. It will also mean accepting some fundamental new challenges for teachers, learners and our whole society.

First we challenge the role of the teacher—

Who becomes a teacher? People who like children and have the passion and the drive to inspire learners. They are ready to deal with individual differences and learning styles. They understand and appreciate all learners in our nation's diverse cultures.

Who teaches teachers? Professional teachers should be teaching education courses at the university level. Professors of education need to spend time in public school classrooms working with the best classroom teachers to prepare rigorous yet realistic courses of study.

Who measures our performance? Teachers must develop new ways of assessing their own performance, (e.g., peer evaluation) as well as that of their students, so the public will know that its investment is paying off. The assessment should be readily available in order to compare schools, districts and states.

We must also challenge ourselves as a profession—

The shift of power away from administrators and other levels of the bureaucracy means more responsibility—and more meetings—to decide new curricula, expenditures, and hiring and firing

Patricia Somers Scott (left) with Facilitator Joan Goldsmith. Ms. Scott is a remedial math teacher with 20 years of teaching experience. She is the author of "Teaching Remedial Math Freestyle," which has been used as the basis for workshops exposing teachers to innovative methods of teaching throughout South Carolina.

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policies. It may also include the end of long summer vacations, a re-definition of the role of teacher unions and a re-examination of tenure. Teachers will need to become risk takers and change agents. They will need to continue their professional growth and . . . to continue learning.

Next we challenge the role of the learner—

Our nation's children must be challenged to learn more than they have in the past and to take responsibility for their own learning. We need to set up alternative ways of measuring student success. Teachers need to push for higher standards, raising them each year.

And, finally, we offer these challenges to the community—

First and foremost, the public must understand and face the issues. Americans need to answer the question: Do we want an educated citizenry?

If the public decides the answer is yes, then the transformation of our nation's education is not simply about piecemeal reform such as choice or vouchers. It calls for quality education for all learners. It means providing the financial and political support that will guarantee equal opportunity for all our school districts regardless of size, ethnicity, and wealth. This translates into a willingness to pay higher taxes and reorder current spending priorities.

On the local level, we urge that all members of the public—whether or not they are parents of public school children—become active participants in schools; that they sponsor programs for learners; support teachers in their professional growth, volunteer when and where needed, visit schools, and talk to children. Parents: find out

what your child is learning; play a role in your child's education; join your school's parent association; enjoy each other.

We are your teachers, and we are coming out of our classrooms to work for change and offer vision and leadership. Here are our next steps:

Lambros Alex Pappas (left) has worked for nearly 20 years on a variety of projects to improve the conditions of teaching. He created a great books/theatre program for middle schools, earned a Harvard University Teaching Fellowship on how children acquire language, and wrote a three-year interior design program for the New England School of Design. Chris Kirchner (right) has taught inner-city high school youth for all seven years of her teaching career. In 1990, she was a finalist for Dade County Teacher of the Year.

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Dear Colleagues:

I admire your professionalism and creativity. Above all, I share your vision. And I've seen it at work in Cougar Valley, an elementary school in Washington State's Central Kitsap School District. Central Kitsap is restructuring all its schools according to a strategic plan *developed by teachers* and adopted by the school district.

The elementary school in this district is well on its way to becoming a school of the future. There are no grades—the teachers work with the same group of students for three years. Walls are moveable—the teaching and learning space is flexible. There are no rows of desks—students work in groups. Each classroom has at least six computers networked into an integrated learning system. Every teacher has a work station on his or her desk. Every teacher has a telephone. There's a 32-computer integrated learning lab and a 16-computer mini-lab. In this school, students are active learners. Teachers are managers of instruction. Technology is used to make the vision work.

In school districts scattered across America, our colleagues are working with their communities to implement their vision of teaching and learning for the 21st century.

But as you and I well know, the obstacles are great. There's an enormous amount of work to be done. We need to restructure schools designed on the 19th century factory model. We need to take better care of all America's children from their earliest years.

Our country must invest time, effort, and resources to turn what we know about learning and teaching into reality. The NEA pledges to continue to join its two million voices with yours in insisting that our national leaders make America's children a top priority. In recognition of your work and your vision, I remain,

Your colleague,

Keith D Geiger

Keith Geiger
President
National Education Association

To change teaching. We will offer our vision to our principals, colleagues, superintendents, unions, professional associations, parent-teacher associations and school boards. We will elect teachers to school boards and, where they are prohibited to serve, work to

Barbara Ann Carter Ellis (left) is a resource room teacher in New York City where she has taught f. 23 years. She has served on advisory boards for Scholastic Magazine, Instructor Magazine, and Xerox Corporation, and is a member of the IMPACT II Board of Directors. Patricia Proctor (right) has been teaching for over 20 years and developed a program which served as a model for statewide gifted education. She is a member of her hometown school board in Connecticut.

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change local laws. We will introduce new teachers and student teachers to our vision at universities and colleges and at staff development conferences. We will begin to create our vision through our participation on site-based management teams.

To change learning. We will share envisioning techniques with our students in order to help them shape their future. We will let them know that it is their right and responsibility to demand that their needs are met and that they share in the accountability for their schools. We will raise our expectations for student achievement. We will use the world as our classroom by connecting with other schools and creating international exchanges.

To change the community. We will present this vision to chambers of commerce and civic associations. We will write about it for publication, and we will seek interviews with local reporters. We will bring more parents into our classrooms and get them involved in their children's education. We will work to change attitudes of elected officials toward the schools, and we will lobby governors and state legislators for more funds for education.

Join with us!

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Dear Teachers:

As school reform efforts mature, several visions of the renewal for teaching and learning become possible. In ***The Teachers' Vision of the Future of Education***, you have described an exciting community where children interact with ideas and information, as well as with teachers and other adults, in open-ended, investigative dialogues.

Your report provides us with a provocative example of "futures history," a technique often used to define a desired future and specify in detail how to get there. "Futures history" frees participants of present constraints and allows the collective imagination to design an ideal future. But the purpose of the exercise is not simply to be imaginative and poetic about the future; it is also to be concrete about how to get there. The trick is to work backward from a distant but well-defined vision to the present, stopping off at watersheds that are marked by points of progress, hence points for strategic action.

How are we doing on the vision side? Asked to define a future toward which teachers are enthusiastic to work, you envision a community of adults and children working together as learners and teachers and growing as thoughtful, caring, and creative workers. Most importantly, you have provided us with a clear definition of active learning as a problem-driven curriculum in which students pursue open-ended issues and along the way make use of every available resource in their community. As described, the learning centers of the future seem most appropriate for teaching aspects of almost every subject area, but not for all aspects of those courses; and we caution against advocating student-designed learning projects to the exclusion of other types of learning and teaching. Even so, there's not much to disagree with; it's certainly a vision worth pursuing.

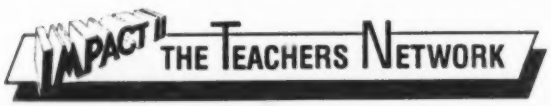
But the next question is, How are we doing on the implementation side? Not as well, we're afraid. The purpose of a "futures history" exercise is to get something more done, to develop specific strategies that will bring about the necessary changes. Though it sounds dull and perhaps even defeating, we must work back from the future to the big watersheds that mark progress toward school reform. That's a harder exercise, one not even begun in the report we've read. Thus the challenge ahead is to take your vision for the future of American education and engage our collective imagination in the pursuit of its implementation.

Arnold R. Shore
President
Council for Aid to Education

IMPACT II Sites:

- Boston School Committee (MA)
- Central New York Teaching Center (NY)
- Chapel Hill Carrboro City Schools (NC)
- Cherry Creek Schools (CO)
- Connecticut State Department of Education (CT)
- Dade Public Education Fund (FL)
- Delaware County (PA)
- District of Columbia Public Schools (Washington DC)
- Fairfax County Public School System (VA)
- Houston Independent School District (TX)
- Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IL)
- IMPACT II Rockland (NY)
- LINK A Business and Education Partnership Everett (WA)
- Los Angeles Educational Partnership (CA)
- Lowcountry Educators Cooperative (SC)
- Lubbock Public Schools (TX)
- Mississippi Effective Schools Consortium (MS)
- New York City Public Schools (NY)
- State of New Jersey (NJ)
- Ohio Department of Education (OH)
- Portland Public Schools (OR)
- Roanoke Valley School Systems (VA)
- Sacramento County (CA)
- Salt Lake Education Foundation (UT)
- San Diego County Office of Education (CA)
- San Francisco Education Fund (CA)
- Santa Barbara County Schools (CA)
- Socorro Independent School District El Paso (TX)
- Southern Westchester Board of Cooperative Educational Services (NY)

FOR MORE INFORMATION:



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